

AMENDMENTIn the Claims:

The following listing reflects amendments to the claims and replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

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MAY 2004*

1. (Currently amended) A method of eliciting an immune response against a hepatitis C virus (HCV) E2 or E1E2 antigen comprising the step of (a) administering to a subject a composition comprising a an isolated polynucleotide encoding an HCV E1E2 antigen, wherein the E1E2 antigen comprises an HCV E1 polypeptide and an HCV E2 polypeptide, or a composition comprising a an isolated polynucleotide encoding a full-length E2 antigen, wherein said full-length E2 antigen does not include the p7 polypeptide, wherein the E2 or E1E2 antigen encoded by the polynucleotide is produced intracellularly and not secreted when expressed in cells of the subject.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the immune response is a humoral immune response.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the humoral immune response generates at least one neutralization of binding (NOB) antibody.
4. (Currently amended) The method of claims 1-3 or claim 7, wherein the composition comprises a an isolated polynucleotide that encodes an E1E2 antigen, wherein the E1E2 antigen comprises an HCV E1 polypeptide and an HCV E2 polypeptide.
5. (Currently amended) The method of claims 1-3 or claim 7, wherein the composition comprises a an isolated polynucleotide encodes a full-length E2 antigen.